

IN THE MATTER OF The Resource Management Act 1991

AND

IN THE MATTER OF The Proposed Queenstown Lakes District Plan
Upper Clutha Mapping Hearing

**SUMMARY STATEMENT of JILL CORSON
ON BEHALF OF VARINA PROPRIETY LTD (# 591)**

URBAN DESIGN

30th May 2017


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1. INTRODUCTION

My name is Jill Corson. I am presenting urban design evidence on behalf of Varina Propriety Ltd in relation to the extent of the Wanaka Town Centre (WTC) and Medium Density Residential (MDR) zones within the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan (PDP). I confirm that I have read the NZ Environment Court Practice Note 2014 and have complied with it in the preparation of my evidence. I will take my primary evidence as read and in today's summary will respond to the rebuttal evidence of Mr Garth Falconer and Ms Vicki Jones as representing the Council's position. I have attached photographs in Figure 1 to illustrate my observations. My summary will focus on the proposed Wanaka Town Centre Transition Overlay (TCTO) which borders the southern side of Brownston Street by the town centre and both sides of Russell Street.

2. RESPONSE TO MR FALCONER'S REBUTTAL URBAN DESIGN EVIDENCE

Paragraph 3.5: I disagree that the level change that occurs on Brownston Street is "*substantial*." It is clear from the two panoramas in my Figure 1 of views along Brownston Street that the feature Mr Falconer asserts as having "*a strong bearing on the Town Centre's layout*" is actually quite muted. The escarpment he describes terminates at the War Memorial Reserve in Chalmers Street. Furthermore, the toe of the escarpment has been excavated so that the land fronting Brownston Street can be easily accessed. There are no practical barriers to building on this frontage at street level and the landform does not cause any visual isolation between the northern and southern parts of Brownston Street.

The level change that concerns Mr Falconer has from my observations a very minor effect on both the landscape and urban form along Brownston Street. The vista along Brownston Street is uninterrupted as evident in the two views in my Figure 1. The feature runs through the existing town centre beside Bullock Creek to the north of Brownston Street but has minimal effect on town function. It will have even less influence on development on the southern side of Brownston Street. In my view, allowing town centre development on both sides of Brownston Street will strengthen the links between the two parts of the town centre on either side of Bullock Creek.

Paragraph 3.6: I agree that the north side of Brownston St east of Bullock Creek has in parts a "*back of the house feel*" with many properties not addressing the street or being used for car parking. However, this effect is restricted to this short section of Brownston St and I see no justification for using it as a reason to limit standards for future development along the south side of the street. The north side of Brownston St west of Bullock Ck has a very coherent commercial form as can be seen in Panorama A in Fig1. Establishing this same character on the southern side of Brownston St will create a more coherent commercial streetscape while adding usefully to the function of Wanaka Town Centre.

Paragraph 3.6/3.7: Fig 2 in Mr Falconer's statement is misleading as much of the empty space he identifies within WTC is either public open space associated with Bullock Ck and the adjoining planted walkways or is used for parking or access.

Mr Falconer's comparison of the size of WTC with that of Queenstown is not, in my opinion, useful to this discussion. Unlike Wanaka, the Queenstown CBD is severely constrained by topography and many key town centre facilities and services are relocating to Frankton. The Queenstown town centre is now a tourism-focussed retail area dominated by cafes, restaurants and visitor accommodation.

Paragraph 3.10: In my paragraph 72, my intention was to describe how Brownston St has the potential to become visually balanced public realm which is stimulating and welcoming and of the calibre of Lower Ardmore Street. This potential can, I believe, more reliably be achieved if the TCTO were to be zoned WTC.

Paragraph 3.11: Russell St is not "*separated from the bulk of Brownston St by a substantial level change.*" It is roughly the same level to the first segment of Brownston St which is around 25% of the length of Brownston St within the TCTO. Russell St should, in my opinion, be incorporated into WTC as:

- It extends between two identified civic nodes and immediately borders WTC to the east. I disagree with Mr Falconer that it is a "*stretch*" to describe the proposed fire and police stations as civic nodes as they provide an indispensable community service and are essential elements of a civic centre.
- Russell Street is physically separate from residential properties to the west on Chalmers St due to a difference in elevation of several meters.

Paragraph 3.19, 3.20: While the buildings, trees and lamp standards shown in the WTCC Guidelines cross section (reproduced in Fig 4, p16 of my primary evidence) afford a degree of balance across Brownston St, this balance would be greatly strengthened by allowing both sides of the street to be developed as town centre. The proposed MDR will create a weaker character as a result of building set back, lower development density and the need for fencing to provide a physical and visual barrier between public and private space. The requirement to provide for vehicle access and parking for each residential unit on each lot will further weaken built character along the TCTO and diminish visual balance across Brownston St.

Residential occupancy at street level has the need for clear demarcation between public and private realm as shown by the fence on the street boundary in the WTCC Guideline sketch. If instead the TCTO were to become WTC, the public could experience Brownston St as a public realm fully bordered by active edges.

Paragraph 3.22: The restricted discretionary rules for building design would be required for both MDR (refer 8.4.25) and WTC (refer 13.4.4) within the TCTO. However, the MDR rules for setback, lower development density, onsite parking and ground level residential resulting in inactive edges and diminished public realm

would undermine benefits achieved from quality building design details and limit overall urban design outcomes for Brownston St. In addition, the assessments for developments within an MDR zone would be made subjectively without benefitting from any guiding framework such as the WTC Character Guidelines which supports quality development in WTC.

Paragraph 3.23: I agree the number of vehicle crossings for MDR would be the same as currently exists however they would be serving multiple households. This increase in households on both on-site vehicle access and parking requirements would limit urban design potential of the TCTO and its surroundings. This submission supports extending the WTC zone along the TCTO as a more assured way of realising this potential.

3. RESPONSE TO MS VICKI JONES REBUTTAL EVIDENCE

Paragraph 7.7: I do not consider that Brownston St has an important role to play in providing a “legible edge” to the town centre. Rather, Brownston St has a primary role as a main entrance into Wanaka and as such a significant part to play in contributing to the town’s character. Responding to Brownston Street’s function as an entry precinct and arterial route in my opinion should be of greatest priority in achieving good urban design outcomes and this would be supported by having WTC development on both sides of Brownston St. The “legible edge” between planning zones referred to by Ms Jones is simply a planning construct and not reflective of good urban design.

Paragraphs 7.19: As noted in my primary evidence (paragraphs 54, 57, 69), once the footprint of MDR is established with its setbacks and lower density, a barrier is effectively formed to expansion of the town centre due to the impracticality and expense required for the change. The part of Wanaka that is the subject of this submission currently has a low level of investment and is, in effect, a clean slate awaiting the next chapter in the development of Wanaka. This is the only area into which the Wanaka Town Centre can expand. This potential is recognised by the proposed TCTO. The underlying MDR zone will however encourage residential development while delaying commercial development and will in consequence nullify the effect of the proposed TCTO.

4. CONCLUSION

Wanaka Town Centre is the heart of the Wanaka economy and community. It seems counterintuitive to the essence of good urban planning to actively prevent expansion of the Town Centre when it is clear that it is already space-constrained. Removing the MDR zoning from the land subject of this submission will not significantly affect residential land supply as there is ample land zoned for medium

density residential development. The need for the town centre to expand is confirmed by this submission from Varina who wishes to invest in the future of the Wanaka Town Centre.

Decisions made in this PDP will have a life of more than 50 years. I believe it is safe to say that the population of Wanaka will continue to grow. Allowing for a more extensive town centre now to cater for this anticipated growth in population will be seen in the future as an act of considerable foresight.

It is my view that changing the MDR zone underlying the proposed TCTO along the south side of Brownston Street to WTC will have significant urban planning benefits in better meeting the future needs of the community and will also realise significant positive urban design outcomes.

Brownston Street is the primary entrance into the southern and western parts of Wanaka but at present it is well described by Mr Falconer's words in paragraph 3.6 of his evidence "*the activities in this area are not very lively and have a 'back of house' feel*". A balanced commercial townscape along the part of Brownston Street included within the proposed TCTO would not only provide a most attractive remedy to this "*back of house feel*" but would also address the future needs of the commercial centre of this flourishing community.

Signature:

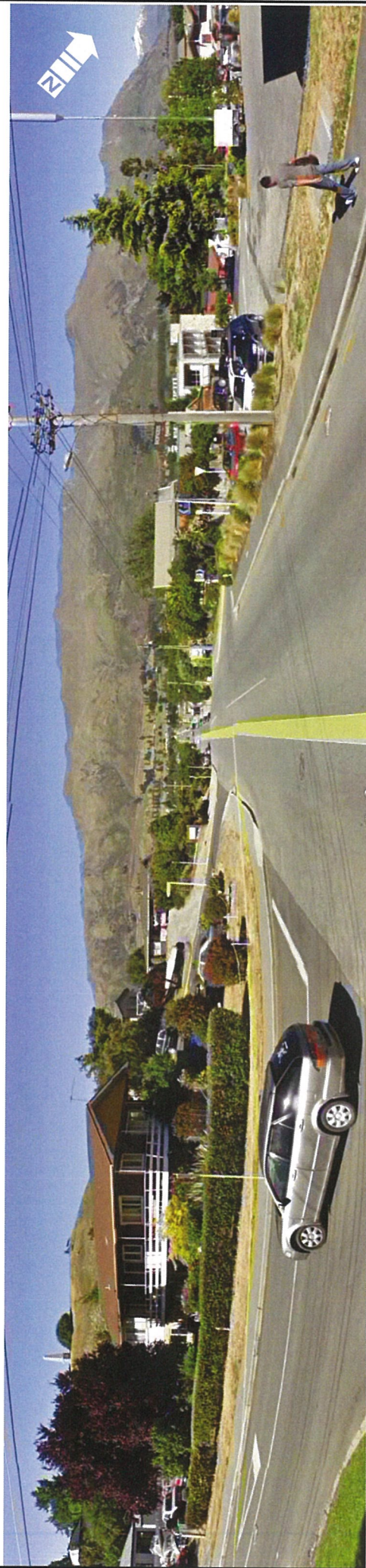
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jill Corson', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Name: Jill Corson

Date: 30th May 2017



Panorama A Brownston Street View North East



Panorama B Brownston Street View South West from Russell Street Intersection with Escarpment visible on the skyline to the left

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Image Source Google Earth Street View
 Dec 2009

Figure 1: Brownston Street Panoramas
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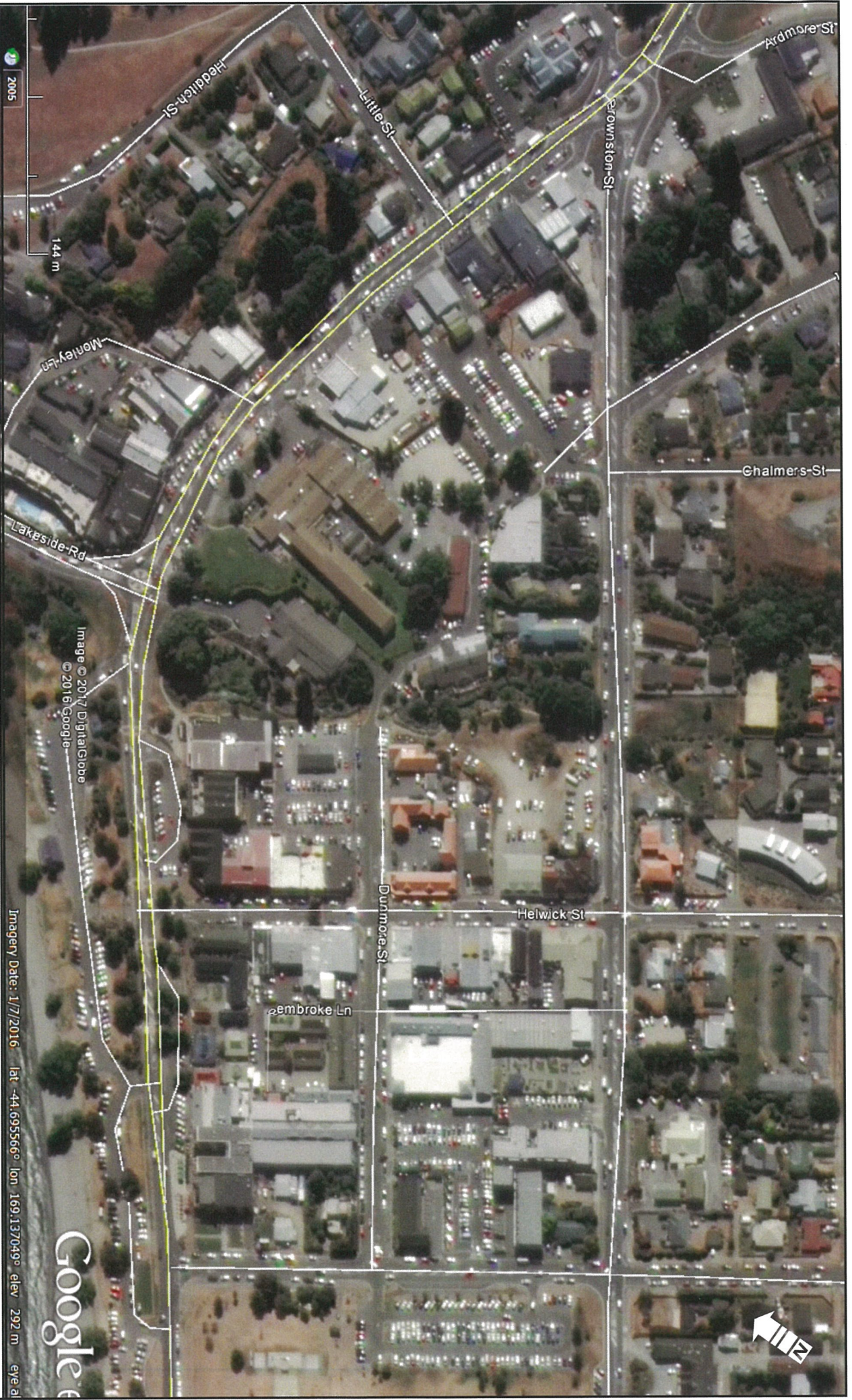


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Imagery Date: 1/7/2016 lat: -4.695566° lon: 169.137049° elev: 292 m eye: al



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Image Source Google Earth
1 July 2016

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